

Continuance

Knowledge and Understanding Passing from Generation to Generation

Winter/Spring 2016

Thank you to the following organizations—the original partners of Generations Serving Generations and conveners of the first intergenerational statewide retreat at Allerton Park on Sept. 14-16, 1986.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Illinois Board of Higher Education
Illinois Community College Board
Board of Governors
Board of Regents
Illinois Community College Faculty Association
Illinois Community College Trustees Assoc.
Chicago State University
Eastern Illinois University
Illinois Council of Community Coll. Presidents
Illinois State University
Northern Illinois University
Oakton Community College, Preschool Program
Sangamon State College
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville
University of Illinois System
University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign
Western Illinois University

STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

Illinois Department on Aging
Governor's Office of Senior Involvement
Governor's Office of Voluntary Action
Illinois State Library
Administration on Aging, Region V

PRESCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL

Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois Association of School Administrators
Illinois Association of School Boards
Illinois Assoc. of Regional Superintendents
Congress of Parents and Teachers
Illinois Alternative Education Association
Illinois Community Education Association
Illinois Education Association
Illinois Federation of Teachers
Illinois Principals Association
Illinois Retired Teachers Association

AGING AND INTERGENERATIONAL

American Association of Retired Persons
Center for Understanding Aging
Chicago Metro Intergenerational Committee
Daily American Newspaper, West Frankfort
Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Illinois Association of Senior Centers
Illinois Gerontology Consortium
Retired Senior and Volunteer Program
Teachers Retirement System
Elderhostel

In this Issue:

Generations Serving Generations from 1986 to 2016

Three Questions for the Future

Refund Learn and Serve

AmeriCorps: National Service in Illinois

Commentary: When Generations Serve Generations

By Jane Angelis, Editor



Jane Angelis, editor of *Continuance*, with grandchildren Daphne and Charlie.

Nearly 30 years have passed since a spirited group representing 44 organizations came together in support of a lifelong view of education and responsibility to community. That first statewide intergenerational retreat, cutting edge at the time, brought together P-20 (pre-school through college) groups from education as well as representatives of the aging network, service entities and state agencies. Participants said they were delighted to have oppor-

tunities for dialogue and agreed that the challenges of education and aging are most often solved when generations address problems together. They discussed the issues of their interest groups and then a wider discussion focused on communication and the interdependence of generations.

In this issue, we continue the spirit of that first retreat by proposing three questions to learn more about the great challenges of education, the aging of our state, and how we organize volunteer and service efforts—often called the infrastructure of service. The collaborative process of answering the questions will serve as our north star over the next 8 months.

Next in this issue, the Centerstory reviews a heart-felt idea for the new Washington administration come 2017, one that will help mobilize our young people and all generations. The goal is to refund a tried and true program called Learn and Serve.

Then comes the highlight of this issue, the stories about AmeriCorps members and their refreshing and energizing examples about how they are making the world a better place, one year at a time.

Last, please note the Illinois Press Association Volunteer Awards on the opposite page. Newspapers and media publicize the captivating stories about volunteers and service learning that reach a broad audience through print, social media and their unique connections to the community. It takes many communication channels to reach all generations.

About the Cover

Three cheers for the 44 organizations listed on the cover. They were the first partners of *Generations Serving Generations* in 1986.

The **sponsors** for the Allerton Retreat were the Illinois Board of Higher Education; Illinois State Board of Education, Department on Aging, Board of Regents, the Southern Illinois University System; Community College Board, Board of Governors, the University of Illinois System and the Governor's Office of Voluntary Action.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education provided a \$35K Higher Education Cooperation Act grant to implement the recommendations of the retreat and develop a state plan for involving older adults in education as tutors, mentors and sharers of their life experiences.

A hearty thank you to these early partners and to those that have joined us during the last 30 years.

Continuance

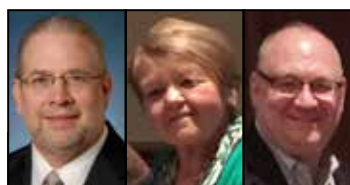
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*Knowledge and Understanding
Passing from Generation to Generation*

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CONTINUANCE

Knowledge and Understanding Passing From Generation to Generation



COMMENTARY

2 ■ When Generations Serve Generations Jane Angelis

4 ■ Generations Serving Generations from 1986 to 2016

THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

7 ■ How are Volunteers Helping to Achieve the 60x25 Goal?

8 ■ How Could a Plan for Aging in Illinois Contribute to the 60x25 Goal?

9 ■ How Could Illinois Strengthen Its Infrastructure of Service?

CENTER STORY

10 ■ Refund Learn and Serve Jim Kielsmeier, Joanna Lennon and Jon Schroeder

AMERICORPS: NATIONAL SERVICE IN ILLINOIS

12 ■ About AmeriCorps

13 ■ It's All about Graduation Ruby Camacho

14 ■ Teach for America Anthony Hendrix

15 ■ Role Models for Future AmeriCrops Members Santita Nunn

16 ■ A Day in the Life of an Americorps Member Michael Levis

17 ■ Making Courts Less Intimidating Stacey Jonas Weiler

18 ■ What Are Your Talents? Tra'Lisha Davis

19 ■ Serve Illinois: The Sponsor for AmeriCrops and the Hub for Volunteering



COMING EVENTS

20 ■ Illinois Civic Mission Coalition Summer Workshops - June and July

20 ■ College Changes Everything Conference - July 21

20 ■ Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration - August 10

20 ■ Grandparents Day - September 11

20 ■ Illinois Education Research Symposium - September 29-30

20 ■ Serving Those Who Served: Veterans Service Day - November 11

ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER AWARDS

On June 10, Dennis DeRossett, executive director of the Illinois Press Association announced the first-place winners of the Year of the Volunteer Award during the Annual Conference of the Illinois Press Association in Springfield. Above L to R: DeRossett, Terri Simon, accepting the award for Bureau County Republican news staff and Dennis Anderson accepting on behalf of Phil Luciano of the Peoria Journal Star. The awards were presented by Jane Angelis, Generations Serving Generations and Scott McFarland, Serve Illinois Commission.

Generations Serving Generations from 1986 to 2016



September 14-16, 1986-Monticello, Illinois

Representatives of education (P-20), the aging network and state agencies spent two and one half days developing the first intergenerational state plan. The goal was to learn more about the missions and goals of other organizations and strengthen organizational communication.

First Row: (l to r) George Pintar, Illinois State Board of Education; Penelope Neale, Illinois Assoc. of Senior Centers; Christine Merrifield, Community College Board; Betty Mullen, Illinois State Board of Education; Mildred Wilson, Chicago Intergenerational Committee; Pat Brady, Board of Governors, Susan Piha, Community College Board; Christine Deady, Northern Illinois University; **Second Row:** Jane Angelis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; Marjorie Burnett, Department on Aging; Pauline Meyer, Illinois Association of School Boards; Lisa Kerr, Department on Aging; Arlene Zielke, Congress of Parents and Teachers;

Third Row: Norman Duncan, Illinois Principals Association; Marcia Escott, Illinois State University; Helene Block, Oakton Community College; Naomi Fowler, Elderhostel; Celia Carreon, Illinois Community College Faculty Association; Frank Smith, Illinois Education Association; Carol Goode, Illinois Community Education Association; Cheryl Peterson, Children and Family Services; Judith Riggs, University of Illinois; Rosamond Robertt, Sangamon State College; Mary Ann Riddle, University of Illinois;

Fourth Row: Darrel Elder, Teachers Retirement System; Violet Ma Lone, University of Illinois; Ann Rupp, RSVP

Fifth Row: George Stoia, Chicago State University; Robert Ensley, Illinois State Library; Fran Pratt, Center for Understanding Aging, Framingham, MA; Jim Doglio, Illinois Association of School Administrators; Margaret Soderstorm, Eastern Illinois University; Pat Yeates, Governor's Office of Voluntary Action; Jerry Lacey, Community College Trustees Association; **Sixth Row:** Nicholas Mannos, Illinois Retired Teachers Association; Jerry Auerbach, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; William Larrick, Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging; Robert Osmon, Western Illinois University; Dean Brent, Illinois Gerontology Consortium; and Anthony Traxler, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

Not pictured: Paul Heath, Illinois Council of Public Community College Presidents; Richard Krause, Association of Regional Superintendents; Rod Groves and Carol Floyd, Board of Regents; Donna Daisy, Illinois Alternative Education Association; Robert Healey, Illinois Federation of Teachers; Josephine Oblinger, Governor's Office of Senior Involvement; Bob Ellis, Conference Journalist, West Frankfort; and Pete Rhodes and Chuck McBride, Conference Photographers, SIU Carbondale.



September 20, 2010: The Summit on Aging and Education: Rather than competing for scarce resources, leaders from aging, education, the workforce and service talked about how they could join forces in addressing common goals.

Connecting generations and their organizations has been the number one priority of Generations Serving Generations for 30 years.

What Is Your Generation?

Greatest Generation: Born before 1922
Matures: Born 1922-1945
Boomers: Born 1946-1964
Generation X: Born 1965-1980
Generation Y: Born 1981-2000
Generation Z: Born 2000 - present



Nov. 1, 2005: The First Senate Forum on Intergenerational Leadership. Four generations represented communities throughout Illinois. The goal was to develop a better understanding of each generation through stories, humor and the development of shared ideas.



Generations Serving Generations

This group of
Gen Zs, Millennials, Gen Xs,
Boomers, and Matures has one
important view in common.
They believe that communities
are at their best when
generations work together.

Generations Serving Generations 2016: The goal is to understand the needs and challenges of each generation and work together for the benefit of all. **L to R:** Dr. John Holton, Concordia University Center for Gerontology and Scott McFarland, executive director, Serve Illinois Commission, co-chairs: Dr. Jane Angelis, Continuanace Magazine, project director. Members include Peggy Luce, Luce Consulting; Louis Kosiba, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund; Melinda LaBarre, Illinois State Board of Education; Pat Bearden, International Society of Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry; **Row Two:** Joyce Gallagher, Chicago Area Agency on Aging; Rev. Tony Pierce, Heaven's View Christian Fellowship; John Hostery, Corporation for National and Community Service; Nisan Chavkin, Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago; Jonathan Lackland, Illinois State University; Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, DuPage Regional Office of Education; Fred Nettles, IL. Dept. of Human Services and Serve Illinois; **Row Three:** Jacqui Moreno, Illinois Student Assistance Commission; Bernie Wong, Chinese American Service League; Isabella Martinez, Netwings; ; Mark DePue, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; Brandon Bodor, Franklin Project Ambassador, Aspen Institute; Rosie Drumgole, Volunteer Connectors and Chicago Cares; Natalie Furllett, Illinois Campus Compact; **Row Four:** Doug Brauer, Richland Community College; Jenne Myers, Chicago Cares; Jacob Nudelman, Serve Illinois Commission; Mathew John Rodriguez, Illinois PTA; Kelia Beck, Serve Illinois Commission; Onie Riley, African-American Family Commission; Barbara Tubekis, Volunteer Center of Winnetka. **Not Pictured:** Eduardo Brambila, Illinois Student Assistance Commission; Arthur Sutton, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Susan Drone, Illinois Community College Board; and William Coussens, Serve Illinois

Three Questions about the Future

Over the last 30 years we have witnessed some remarkable stories about how the generations serve one another. For example, students in a service-learning class conducted a survey at the local senior center and discovered that older people wanted to learn more about computers. Ah-ha! The eager students developed a curriculum and taught the classes. One student remarked that he was very nervous about interacting with older adults but was elated after the experience. "I didn't realize that I could be a teacher," he said. Another example is about the outreach and concern of older adults for students. A group of retired professors at SIUC decided that they could have an impact on students in remediation. They met with them once a week--mainly to listen and help with study skills. The bottom line is that when generations join forces, it is good news for everyone.

In light of the importance of cross-generational approaches, *Continuance* magazine will initiate an effort to learn more about the interdependence of generations, the connections between aging and education, and how the *infrastructure of service* strengthens both. We will ask three questions.

1. How are volunteers and service programs helping to achieve the 60x25 Goal?

The research about volunteers, service and service learning demonstrates the value to education. One of the concerns voiced by teachers and educators at all levels is that too many students become disengaged along the educational pipeline. How are volunteers and service learning changing this story?

2. How could a *Plan for the Aging of Illinois* contribute new momentum to the 60x25 Goal?

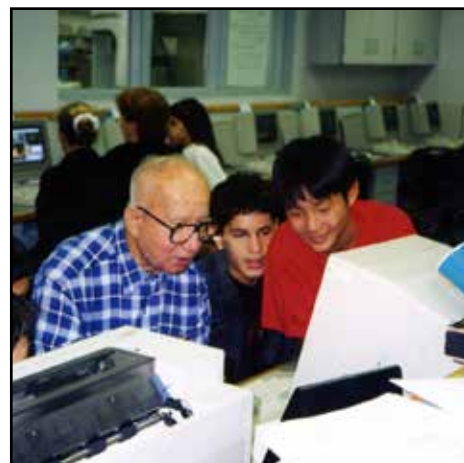
As Illinois ages, existing and new coalitions frame aging and retirement as a time to include the great resource of retirees. Dr. John Rowe

with the MacArthur Research Network for Aging Societies suggests some strategies.

3. How could Illinois strengthen its *infrastructure of service*?

Most of us can't make an impact on the budget or policy, but we can offer our time in service. As followup to the recommendations from the Year of the Volunteer, Generations Serving Generations and partners will learn more about how volunteer programs are organized, connected to one another, and reflect public policy.

Over the next 8 months, *Continuance* magazine along with Generations Serving Generations and partners hope to learn more about the organizational structures of volunteer, service, and service-learning programs, as they relate to student success, the civic engagement of all generations and the aging of Illinois. The findings will be reported in the Winter/Spring 2017 issue of this magazine called "We're in this world together."



Students at Field Middle School teach senior citizens about computers as part of a service-learning class. They conducted a survey at the local senior center and found a need for computer courses.

The 60x25 Goal

An important rallying call for education is the 60 x 25 goal: by 2025, 60 percent of Illinoisans will have a quality college degree or credential.

Illinois adopted the 60 x 25 goal in 2009 as part of its "Public Agenda for College and Career Success." Dr. Jim Applegate, executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education writes, "While college attainment in Illinois is increasing (the most recent analyses show nearly 50 per cent of the workforce with a valuable college credential), we need to do more to accelerate progress because we know that going forward more than 2/3s of all new and replacement jobs in Illinois will require college." [Public Agenda](#)

1 How Are Volunteers and Service Programs Helping to Achieve the 60x25 Goal?

A too-familiar story tells of students dropping out of school. For example, when James dropped out of high school, a concerned educator asked, "Why?" James reflected on his education and where it had gone off track, he said, "I failed to bond with school from the very beginning: I never developed of love of learning." As a result, at Grade Five he vowed to quit school and the day he turned 16, he did!

Professor Helene Block Fields, an intergenerational pioneer for early learning, says that when volunteer grandmas and grandpas are part of early childhood education, the kids are more comfortable with learning. "They look forward to school and the children learn better when older adults spend time with them. The positive effects stay with them for the rest of their lives."

Early learning is key to education in the later years, according to research from the [Illinois Early Learning Council](#). Children with a solid educational foundation in their first five years are significantly more likely to be successful in school, college, career and life."

What James experienced at the very beginning of his education was disengagement. John Bridgeland one of the authors of the "Silent Epidemic" wrote for *Continuance* magazine, that "dropping out is not a sudden act, but a gradual process of disengagement." He said that when students were interviewed about why they left school, 81 percent said they needed to see the connection between school and the real world.

Jim Kielsmeier, Senior Research Fellow, National Youth Leadership Council, found answers to that challenge through service learning. In [Growing to Greatness](#), he and other experts cite examples of how service and service learning helps students succeed.

Shelley Billig, a longtime researcher for service learning at RMC Research Corporation says, "Service learning relates to students' lives and helps them to apply their learning to real-life situations, helping them to feel that their work is important and valuable to others."

According to *Serving Well*, a Wingspread Conference publication sponsored by the Johnson Foundation, the seeds of a lifetime of service are planted early in life and are harvested throughout the life cycle. "Throughout the lifespan, service enriches communities and helps individuals fulfill their function as responsible citizens."



When volunteer grandmas and grandpas are part of early childhood education, the kids are more comfortable with learning. Above: a member of the Foster Grandparents Program spends time with a preschool student.

2 How Could a Plan for the Aging of Illinois Contribute to the 60x25 Goal?

A Report called [An Aging World 2015](#) points to the historical change: “For the first time in human history, people aged 65 and over will outnumber children under age 5.” Yet a 2014 Pew study reported that only 20% of Americans feel that an aging society is a major issue.” The demographics are clear, Americans are living longer and few states have plans that reflect the needs and resources for the future.

Dr. John Rowe, the director of the [MacArthur Research Network on Aging Societies](#) writes in *Daedalus* that the U.S. is not preparing for its aging. Rowe cites three main areas to consider when planning for an aging society. The list could very easily relate to action on the 60x25 goal. Rowe’s plan for the Aging of America outlines ideas to improve:

- equality and opportunity across generations;
- productivity in work and volunteering; and
- human capital development through lifelong education and skills training.

Further, a cross-generational planning process for the aging of Illinois could be the momentum needed for dealing with many of the key challenges of older adults and at the same time address the needs and resources of all generations.

Irene Frye, executive director of the Retirement Research Foundation urges Illinoisans to be conscious of the extraordinary resource of older persons. “Harness their potential to

strengthen our communities, in true partnership across the ages,” she says.

Clearly aging isn’t only for those 60+, we begin aging from the first moments of life. Joyce Gallagher, director of the Chicago Senior Services and Area Agency on Aging, cites the age-friendly trend that helps older people remain in their homes as a result of support systems in their communities. She says that age-friendly cities benefit all ages.

In a subtle way, we understand the great resources of the aging population, but let’s consider the contributions when generations serve generations. Retirees visit a youth center to tutor boys at risk and then to their surprise, the boys come and shovel their sidewalks in the winter. An older couple reads to kids at preschool. When the wife loses her sight, the students, now in third grade, read to her. Members of a fraternity help senior citizens relocate to their new facility. The following semester, the center becomes a resource for freshman students who are overwhelmed by the college experience. When reflection is added to these service experiences it takes volunteering to a new level.

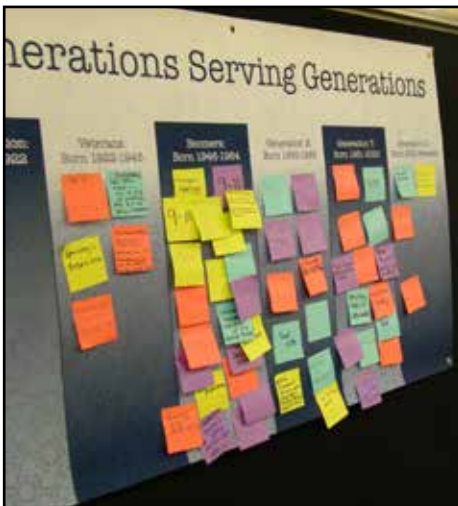


From the Year of the Volunteer
Reflecting on the service experience—formally or informally, alone or in groups—is the key to making service a worthwhile learning opportunity at every stage in life. Through quiet reflection, writing in a journal, or discussing the experience with others, those involved gain valuable insight into what they have learned, what the service means to them and how it has benefited the community.

3 How could Illinois Strengthen Its Infrastructure of Service?

Brandon Bodor, former executive director of Serve Illinois writes “When you hear the word infrastructure, you generally think about bridges, buildings, railroad tracks and highways. Infrastructure represents the building blocks of a connected society and the foundation of communities.

The symbolic bridges, highways and railroads of the infrastructure of service are organizations that manage the volunteer process or entities within organizations that contribute to part of the process. Some are locally focused in communities, others have a larger geographical responsibility, such as counties, regions and statewide. Some relate specifically to service, while others provide helping hands to support the goal of the group or organization. Communication systems are at the heart of the infrastructure, with news, social media, radio, TV, phone and face-to-face communication part of the infrastructure.



What is the most memorable news event in your lifetime? The question was asked during a Summit on News Literacy held in Chicago on August 10, 2014 sponsored by the McCormick Foundation and Generations Serving Generations. Each participant selected a memorable news event for their generation and reflected on the fact that most everyone had selected a sad or traumatic event.

The outcome according to [Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure](#), produced by the United Nations, is “at the core of social capital and underpins most social action in civil society.” We often witness the spontaneous building of a service infrastructure in a natural disaster when volunteers help in their communities and emergency management organizations provide the challenges.

Communities are strengthened when they recognize and engage the assets and resources of their citizens across

generations. In Illinois many sectors are involved in volunteering, service and service learning. During the Year of the Volunteer, it was evident that business, faith-based organizations, education, health organizations, social service groups and more—organized and managed thousands of volunteers and often join together to do so. Those volunteer programs were discussed in the [Summer/Fall 2015 Continuance](#) by author and workforce expert Peggy Luce. Her stories present the many ways that volunteer programs are providing a foundation of support, that is, an infrastructure of service in communities throughout Illinois.

Another budding group is the [Volunteer Connectors of Illinois](#). They are in the process of establishing a statewide service network that will reflect support for an infrastructure of service throughout Illinois.

Over the next 8 months, we hope to learn more about the communication systems, successful practices in the process of volunteer management, and recommendations regarding the role of the state, counties, and communities.

REFUND LEARN AND SERVE

**By Jim Kielsmeier, Ph.D.
Joanna Lennon and
Jon Schroeder**

More than a quarter century ago, Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton and Senate Leaders including Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Harris Wofford (D-PA) and Dave Durenberger (R-MN) launched a bi-partisan initiative called Learn and Serve America. The initiative was designed to engage and mobilize young people as civic assets and active citizens. The program was created in 1990 and then expanded in 1993 to establish the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Between 1994 and 2010, more than \$700 million in grants were made under Learn and Serve America to states for school districts and community non-profits, colleges, Indian Tribes and non-profit organizations. Millions of young people in thousands of local communities benefitted from and contributed to this highly regarded program with relatively little cost to taxpayers. It is clear, however, that it's now time to resume funding this highly regarded, cost-effective program.

Fortunately, reactivating Learn and Serve America is not a complicated legislative task. Restoring Learn and Serve America as a fully operating program simply requires an explicit line-item in the FY2017 appropriations bill that funds the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

Likewise, reactivating Learn and Serve America also won't break the federal bank. The appropriation is a mere 3.6 percent of the budget



Above: High school students from a service learning program at the National Youth Leadership Council brainstorm about their impact on the community. **Below:** The results of their discussion and next steps.



request for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Even more striking, Learn and Serve's budget represents less than 0.024 percent of the President's discretionary spending budgets for the three federal departments (Labor, HHS and Education) that come under the jurisdiction of these two Appropriations Subcommittees.

As in the past, a majority of the \$40.2 million appropriation would go to the states for competitive sub-grants to school districts and community partners. Except for \$2.0 million in research on Service Learning's impacts, the rest would go to

colleges and universities, non-profits and Indian Tribes stimulating and supporting Service Learning projects in local communities.

Why resurrect 'Learn and Serve' now? One simple answer is that Learn and Serve America is a necessary component of broader strategies to achieve education and workforce goals as well as lifelong civic engagement and citizenship. Research has documented the positive impact of service learning on students, teachers, youth workers and other adults who work with young people.

Students engaged in a well-supported service learning program have demonstrated improved academic achievement in traditional subject areas and growth in more subjective indicators like “transitions to adulthood” with workforce skills and positive contributions to their communities.

This set of indicators is critical in determining how society views its youngest citizens—as allies and assets in addressing community needs—or as an age- and often racially-defined set of “burdens and problems” needing to be “carried and fixed” by adults.

Jim Kielsmeier is the founder and Senior Research Fellow, National Youth Leadership Council; Joanna Lennon is the founder and CEO of Civic Assets; and Jon Schroeder is the former policy director for US Senator David Durenberger.



AMERICORPS: NATIONAL SERVICE IN ILLINOIS

The National Service Pledge

I will get things done for America — to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity, I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.

AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members representing four generations raise their hands and voices in the National Serve Pledge. Each October, AmeriCorps members from the four corners of Illinois march to the Capitol and reaffirm their commitment on National Service Recognition Day.

AmeriCorps is designed to help strengthen and rebuild communities affected by poverty, impacted by disasters, and marked by crime. Together, AmeriCorps members and the volunteers they mobilize tackle some of our nation's toughest problems: crime, illiteracy, homelessness, gang violence, and drug abuse. They teach and tutor to help students improve academically, mentor children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, run after-school programs, reconnect prisoners with mainstream society, care for seniors, and protect the environment.

Not only do communities touched by AmeriCorps benefit from the services that members provide, but AmeriCorps members benefit from their own service experience.

Members are given opportunities to learn skills during their specific service assignment, such as tutoring or construction. Even more so, members are given opportunities to develop leadership qualities and to enhance skills such as time management and conflict resolution. The nonprofit organizations with which members serve are also capitalizing on members' newfound or improved skills. Many organizations rely on AmeriCorps members to help mobilize the volunteers necessary to expand the organization's reach within its community. From *AmeriCorps: Changing Lives, Changing America*, Corporation for National and Community Service

About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, often described as the domestic Peace Corps, is a national service program that involves people “getting things done” in local communities. AmeriCorps members tutor and mentor in schools and colleges throughout Illinois, restore parks in our cities and rural areas; provide health and safety information about prenatal care, wellness, and disaster preparation; support justice systems, reach people in need and give an example of service in action.

In Illinois 1,700 AmeriCorps members perform direct service for communities through 26 programs. Their efforts are multiplied with the addition 32,070 volunteers they recruit to work alongside them. Through their service, AmeriCorps members strengthen communities and build relationships with the organizations and the people they serve.

AmeriCorps members commit to full-time or part-time service over a 9-12 month period. During their service, members may receive health coverage, training, and deferment of student loans. About half of all members also receive a modest living allowance. After successful completion of their service term, members receive an education award that can be applied toward existing student loans or used to pay the current cost of attending a higher education program.

The [Serve Illinois Commission](#) oversees all aspects of program administration and training for the AmeriCorps program (see pg. 19).



AmeriCorps members march to the Capitol to commit their efforts to Illinois and America.

Put service to work to solve our most pressing challenges, such as tackling the dropout crisis and strengthening our schools; improving energy efficiency; safeguarding the environment; improving health care in low-income communities; expanding economic opportunities for low-income individuals; and preparing for and responding to disasters and emergencies.

[Serve America Act](#)

The Stories that Follow

The following stories illustrate national service in action and the many ways that members serve communities and neighborhoods throughout Illinois. These stories will reinforce your appreciation for the fine work of AmeriCorps members and the potential for a lifetime of service.

It's All about Graduation!

[Project MORE \(Making Opportunities for Reading Enrichment\)](#) provides tutoring for Head Start parents in GED by offering English as a Second Language classes, employment readiness, and financial literacy workshops. In addition, MORE members provide volunteer management training to Head Start staff. The program helps AmeriCorps members gain the knowledge and skills to work with families, increase access to resources for families and professionals and recruit volunteers and community members.

By Ruby Camacho

Curtis Edwards, a student and father, registered for GED tutoring when he was in his 50's. He dedicated three years of studying and not only passed his GED, but was the valedictorian of the program. During his graduation speech, he shared that he was proud to achieve his GED in his 50's but was also looking forward to enrolling in college courses with his son, who had just graduated from Wells High School. Both father and son are on a journey to continue their education. His story inspired the parents and students at the ceremony, and reflects the power of service and dedication.



Graduation is a family celebration for Project MORE participants. For many, it fulfills a longtime promise.

MORE: Making Opportunities for Reading Enrichment

Project MORE and the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois Chicago focuses on economic opportunity by providing critically needed support services for Head Start parents. Through a research-based curriculum and adult education services, MORE is committed to developing lifelong learning and economic self-sufficiency for Head Start and child care families.

AmeriCorps Project MORE members have been an essential part of giving parents the graduation experience they missed earlier in life due to obligations or circumstances that led them to abandon their education. Every summer, members plan a touching experience to celebrate parents, which includes a graduation ceremony with caps and gowns, certificates, and the presence of their loved ones and tutors who provided support in their journey.

Parents, ranging in ages 18-64+, come into the program with varying reading levels (from a second grade to high school level). With their determination in conjunction with

the support and tutoring of members and staff, they are able to pass the GED exam.

What makes the MORE program experience special? Many of the AmeriCorps members come from the communities served and some have also been on the receiving end of GED services. AmeriCorps members at the UIC Center for Literacy have helped hundreds of Head Start parents obtain their GED since 2003. Many of their former members have transitioned from member to staff. Currently, over 20 staff are former AmeriCorps members, including the staff that oversee the AmeriCorps program.

Ruby Camacho is the director of Project MORE at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Teach for America

[Teach For America](#) helps eliminate the academic opportunity gap by recruiting, selecting, preparing, supporting and developing the leadership talent committed to ending education inequity in our community. Teach For America corps members (first- and second-year teachers) are path-changing teachers. After their initial two-year commitment, alumni are lifelong leaders and advocates for fundamental change in education, with the majority continuing their careers as veteran teachers, school leaders, or leaders within education reform organizations.

By Anthony Hendrix

As an advisor for more than sixteen sophomore boys, I can honestly say my life is far from dull. Every morning and afternoon, I have the opportunity to spend quality time with each of them and identify areas in which students need additional growth or assistance. I recently had a conversation with one of my students regarding his GPA and the possibility of him not advancing to eleventh grade. I informed him he would have to start attending mandatory office hours in order to get caught up academically. Immediately, I was met with displeasure and push back. The student thought this additional support was not necessary and "doing too much". In the end, he reluctantly decided to trust me and agreed to attend office hours. After only two days, the student was seeing incredible results and came to visit me after school to share the great news. He thanked me for holding him accountable and concluded by asking me "why I cared so much". I remember feeling like someone had punched me in the stomach. Where did my advisee get the idea that someone shouldn't care about him? I looked him in the eye and told him I did it because I loved him and believed in his abilities more than my own. Since this time, this moment strengthened the



A Teach For America AmeriCorps teacher helping individual students to master longitude and latitude, just one of the daily classroom objectives. Yes, the answer is 80 degrees north.

relationship I share with my students and allowed me to realize the importance of holding students to high expectations."

A note from Ben Chrischilles, the executive director of Teach for America Chicago: "Anthony's classes are based largely on student-led discussions and labs, which prepare his students to do all of the heavy thinking in class. They push each other to back up their statements and arguments with evidence and reasoning, and challenge each other's thoughts. Anthony rarely gives an answer, but instead pushes the students to engage in the process and back up

their answers collaboratively. It's very clear that Anthony's students are successful because of the trusting relationships they have with each other and because they thrive in the challenging academic environment that Anthony has created. He has consistently remained one of the highest performing science teachers in the entire Noble Network and is the model for science education at Teach For America in our region."

Anthony Hendrix is a second-year member of the Teach for America (TFA) project at Noble Rowe-Clark Math & Science Academy in Chicago.

Role Models for Future AmeriCorps Members



[Operation AmeriCorps](#)

East St. Louis



AmeriCorps member Derrien Wooten talks to his students about their views on events in their community. How do you have a disagreement in a calm way? It is apparent that the students are captivated by Derrien and his interest in their opinions. Derrien is planting the seeds for future AmeriCorps members.

Eighty-five AmeriCorps members provide academic support and in- and out-of-school summer services to children in 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. AmeriCorps members recruit volunteers to serve as mentors and career coaches. In addition, six AmeriCorps VISTA members implement a citywide College and Career Pathways program, focused on improving academic achievement and college and career planning. A team of 20 AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) participate in a program that includes academic, recreation, and service learning projects for three months in the summer.

By Santita Nunn

Derrien Wooten, an AmeriCorps member in East St. Louis, has been very deliberate in cultivating relationships with students at the Mason Clark Middle School where he serves as a Behavior Intervention Specialist. His presence allows the instructor to spend less time on classroom management and more time on lesson facilitation. Although he is over 6 ft. tall, Derrien attributes his success to “being real” not his size. He is from the same community as his students so they know and trust him. Derrien is described as being approachable, transparent, and reliable. He is a “gentle giant.”

One day Derrien’s students were arguing and making negative comments about another young man who was killed in their neighborhood. Derrien was able to intervene and talk to the teens about anger management, having a disagreement in a calm way, and being accountable for their actions. He said, “Although the students did not fully grasp everything, it was a starting point. They were open to listening.”

Derrien works with school administrative staff to facilitate two sections of a leadership development course that focuses on using character education to deter negative behaviors. Because of the quality of his work and the relationships developed with staff and students in the building, he was invited to serve with the School Within a School initiative (SWIS). The SWIS class focuses on students who are chronically disruptive in other courses and provides them with specialized attention and course structure, promoting individual instruction.

In the afternoon, Derrien serves as a tutor and mentor at the Griffin Center in the Roosevelt Homes where he is also a resident. Derrien, who is also a certified in Restorative Practices and a Teen Outreach Program facilitator, has been using his placement as a training opportunity, as he prepares to complete his Bachelor’s degree in education. He hopes to have the opportunity to teach in the East St. Louis school district in the very near future.

Santita Nunn is the executive director of the East St. Louis program: Operation AmeriCorps.

A Day in the Life of an AmeriCorps Member—with Preschoolers

As part of the [Western Illinois University-Quad Cities/WQPT-PBS Early Childhood Literacy Project](#), AmeriCorps members serve individually in early childhood settings in the Quad Cities Area. Members help improve literacy skills for children at risk as well as under-served children. Literacy in early childhood has a direct impact on the youngster's future success in school because it relates to just about everything related to their development. On a typical day children are learning language through play, conversations, reading books and observing and interacting with others. AmeriCorps members encourage and support language learning in many ways.

By Michael Levis

Arrived 9:25 a.m.

I greeted the preschoolers and received three hugs; put hat, coat, and bag away. I proceeded to play in the “Kitchen” area (currently a police station) where I was arrested for speeding (I was going “100”) by Officer Andy. Helped Officer Greg spell “police” on his notepad. Grace and Austin both wrote tickets for me, explaining I had to pay even though it was for the same offense. After breaking out of jail I wandered between “Tubes”, “Magnets”, and “Puzzle” areas.

A puzzle of a large leaf with a butterfly and caterpillars on it was set out on the carpet. Zach originally began putting the puzzle together while Grace and Wendy arrived to help. After assembling the puzzle once, Zach left and Carol and May (who had just arrived) joined in destroying and then rebuilding it. We used our words to share pieces and ask our friends to move if they were blocking a part of the puzzle.

Zach spent time “writing” and made “Aooooooo” on his notepad. When told the sound the word he wrote

made, he knew it was a “howl” sound a dog or wolf might make.

I read “(Mostly) Wordless” to the class and it was well received. We counted the fish in one of the stories and they knew what a “sailfish” was. We learned the words “nimble”, “athletic”, and “exhausted” today. May was the one who asked about the words and what they mean.

We came back to the classroom where I got my things together to leave. I received five hugs. The teacher reminded them to say goodbye “with our hands” and the kids waved goodbye.

Departed 11:35 a.m.

It is amazing what can happen in two hours when children are encouraged to express themselves and learn through play in the classroom. AmeriCorps members in the WIU-QC/WQPT Early Childhood Literacy Project encourage literacy in many different ways, but respecting children's play is the most important aspect of literacy for young children.

Michael Levis is an AmeriCorps member with the WIU-Quad Cities AmeriCorps.



AmeriCorps members are setting up a Literacy Center in the Garden area at the Botanical Center. Every Monday they read stories and conduct literacy activities for children who are visiting the Botanical Center. It is another way for AmeriCorps members to help children in the Quad Cities Area.

Making Courts Less Intimidating for Those Without Lawyers

Court procedure, legal terminology and even navigating the courthouse itself can be confusing for people coming to court on their own. Illinois JusticeCorps was created to make Illinois courts more welcoming and less intimidating for people without lawyers.

Justice Mary K. Rochford
Illinois Supreme Court
Commission on Access to Justice



At the Knox County Courthouse, Illinois JusticeCorps member Amanda helps a young man complete some forms needed to continue his legal process through the courts. Amanda helped him make sense out of a very confusing situation.

Illinois JusticeCorps is administered statewide by the Illinois Bar Foundation, The Chicago Bar Foundation for operations in Cook County, and with guidance and support from the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice. The program recruits, trains and provides the necessary support for the volunteers with the help of the local stakeholders.

Illinois JusticeCorps is an innovative AmeriCorps program that smooths access to justice for the growing number of unrepresented people in the courts. Illinois JusticeCorps members do not provide legal advice, but are able to serve as guides to make the courts more welcoming and less intimidating for people. Members receive thorough training, including learning about the activities in the courthouse, available resources and the difference between legal information and advice.

By Stacey Jonas Weiler

Legal procedures can be confusing and intimidating but Illinois JusticeCorps members use their creativity and experience to help people find solutions. For example, Ben, a Illinois JusticeCorps member stationed in the Knox county courthouse, had a challenging experience with a non-English speaking court patron. This young woman visited the courthouse for help but couldn't communicate what she needed since she spoke only French. The patron was referred to Illinois JusticeCorps.

Many of the smaller courthouses around Illinois don't have the funds for translation services, so Ben had to be creative. First he tried using Google Translate to communicate with the patron, but this was unsuccessful. Eventually, Ben located a French professor at Knox College. The professor arrived and after a short conversation was able to relay that the patron had been the victim of a crime and was actually trying to file a police report. Ben and the professor accompanied the patron to the police station to make a report.

On a separate occasion, Illinois JusticeCorps members were stationed in the courthouse law library. A distraught woman with visible injuries

and a child in tow came in looking for assistance with an Order of Protection for domestic violence. The Circuit Clerk told the woman where to find the forms and informed the woman that Illinois JusticeCorps could help. Amanda, a Illinois JusticeCorps Fellow, was able to step in. She sat with the woman for about an hour answering questions while the woman completed the lengthy Order of Protection forms. Meanwhile across the room, another member drew pictures on scrap paper with the child to keep her busy.

After the forms were completed, Amanda walked with the woman and child to the Circuit Clerk's office to file the forms, and was able to calm the woman while explaining what would happen next in the process. Then she walked with the patron to the appropriate courtroom to meet a domestic violence advocate and counselor.

While both of these stories are sadly common situations faced by people attempting to resolve their legal issues on their own, they illustrate the valuable assistance of Illinois JusticeCorps members.

Stacey Jonas Weiler is the Program Operations Director, Illinois JusticeCorps, Illinois Bar Foundation

What Are Your Talents?

[City Year](#) is an education-focused nonprofit organization that partners with public schools to help keep students in school and on track to graduate. City Year AmeriCorps members commit to a year of full-time service in schools, where they work as tutors, mentors and role models. Founded in Boston in 1988, City Year works in 25 cities across the United States and has international affiliates in London and Johannesburg, South Africa.

In this captivating story, Tra'Lisha Davis recognized that her students had doubts about their abilities, so she shared some of her experiences that gave the students a view of the possible.

By Tra'Lisha Davis

As I sat in one of my small English Language Arts (ELA) groups, my five 7th and 8th graders just stared at me. Although they enjoyed coming to the small group they dreaded reading. This is because they recognize that they are not good readers. They also recognize they need to work on their fluency. During one small group session, they decided that they weren't going to read. Since they choose not to read, I told them to take out a piece of paper and without thinking, list all their talents. After everyone had their list, I asked them to think about how they mastered the skills they had listed. Reluctantly they followed my instructions. When they finished that step they gave me a look that said, "What's next Ms. Davis?" A little frustrated I asked them if I could tell them a story. At first, they didn't seem like they wanted me to share, but even if they didn't I was going to share anyway.

I began to tell them how there were few books in my house so my access to books was limited. As a middle schooler, I lacked basic reading skills. Like the skills they listed on their paper, reading is also a skill. I told them of my struggle and how

it made me practice. With practice, I enjoyed reading and writing and eventually became an English major. In that moment, something clicked in their heads. They may not have said it with words, but their facial expressions were enough for me. In that moment, I knew that I had just given them hope. They may not end up as English majors, but I know they will end up as better readers. More importantly, they have learned that reading is a skill and in order to get better, they have to practice.

Tra'Lisha Davis is an AmeriCorps Member of City Year Chicago serving at the Dvorak School of Excellence in Chicago. Born and raised on the Southside of Chicago in the Auburn and Gresham community, Tra'Lisha Davis believes that having a willingness to learn enables one to excel beyond their means. In May of 2015, she graduated as a first generation college student from Dominican University in River Forest, IL with a Bachelor of Arts in English. After graduating from Dominican, she was accepted to join the City Year Chicago corps where she currently serves 7th and 8th grade students in the subjects of ELA and Math at Dvorak School of Excellence in North Lawndale.



Above: AmeriCorps members from City Year listen to a briefing about their service experience. **Below:** A City Year member tutors a Chicago Public School student. Reading and math are often challenging for these learners. However City Year members help students understand difficult concepts and help them find joy in learning while building confidence for the next challenge.



Serve Illinois: The Sponsor for AmeriCorps and Hub for Volunteering



L to R Top: Scott McFarland, executive director, Serve Illinois; Fred Nettles, chair, Serve Illinois and Acting Bureau Chief Of Community Support Services, DHS; Don Baden, vice chair, Serve Illinois; and Barb Tubekis, Volunteer Recognition Committee and Volunteer Center of Winnetka; **Bottom Row:** Committee chairs: Resource Development: Debra Marton, Comcast and Cynthia Sims, SIU Carbondale; Strategic Planning: Jeff Turnbull, RSVP Peoria and Tazwell Counties; Regional Commissioners: Anne Schuman. Not pictured: Community Outreach Committee: Chris Errera

From Serve Illinois

Remember that only a quarter of Illinoisans volunteer each year. That 25.9% does amazing work, but they cannot make positive change for Illinois alone. Every day, thousands of volunteer positions go unfilled. If you already volunteer, bring a family member, friend, or co-worker. If you have never volunteered before, visit [Serve Illinois](#) and find an opportunity that interests you. Just imagine what we could do if all of us gave a few hours. -Scott McFarland

The Serve Illinois Commission

Scott McFarland, executive director of the Serve Illinois Commission salutes volunteers: “Everything we are and everything we will become is often because of a volunteer — the coach, teacher, or maybe even a stranger who appeared in our moment of need.” He says, “Just when we thought we had failed, a volunteer stepped into our lives and shared a path to success.”

The Serve Illinois Commission is a 40-member bi-partisan board appointed by the Governor and administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The enabling legislation of the Serve Illinois Commission (PA98-0692, 20 ILCS 2330) charges the Commission to promote and support community service in public and private programs to meet the needs of Illinois citizens, to stimulate new volunteerism and community service initiatives and partnerships, and to serve as a resource and advocate within the Department of Public Health for community service agencies, volunteers, and programs which utilize state and private volunteers.

The Serve Illinois Commission is responsible for the AmeriCorps program in Illinois and strives to support meaningful volunteerism in rural, suburban, and urban Illinois involving people of all backgrounds, cultures, and ages. The Commission applauds volunteers who are making measurable differences in their communities because they are well trained, supported, and know how to solve problems.

Illinois Civic Mission Coalition 2016 Summer Workshops in June and July

Join the McCormick Foundation and Illinois Civics Teacher Mentors from your region for a two-day workshop – Teaching the 2016 Election and Beyond. This workshop is designed to build teacher capacity in the practices required for the new civics course requirement including: controversial issue discussion, service learning, and simulations.

Using the 2016 Election as a backdrop, the workshop offers:

- Strategies for applying new practices in the classroom
- Free lesson plans from respected civic education providers
- Information on local resources to supplement civics instruction

CIVICS COURSE IMPLEMENTATION TRAINING

JUNE 2016

- 13-14 Regional Teacher Training
Lombard, IL
- 15-16 Regional Teacher Training
Joliet, IL
- 20-23 Illinois Civics Teacher Academy Kankakee Community College, Kankakee, IL
- 27-28 Regional Teacher Training
Carbondale, IL
- 29-30 Regional Teacher Training
Edwardsville, IL

JULY 2016

- 11-12 Regional Teacher Training
Macomb, IL
- 13-14 Regional Teacher Training
Charleston, IL
- 18-19 Regional Teacher Training
Bloomington-Normal
- 20-21 Regional Teacher Training
Lincolnshire, IL
- 25-26 Regional Teacher Training
Dixon, IL
- Workshops are FREE! IllinoisCivics.org

College Changes Everything Conference: July 21 *Aligning Attainment with Employer Engagement and Economic Growth*

2016 College Changes Everything Conference
Tinley Park Convention Center, Tinley Park, Illinois
July 21, 2016 • 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Register now to attend the sixth annual conference [College Changes Everything](#) – the state's premier college access and success event. This one day conference focuses on effective practices and showcases resources available to help with increasing college access and college completion for students in support of the state's Goal 2025 – to increase the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025.

The Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration: August 10

The Times They Are a-Changin'
Metcalfe Federal Building, 77 W. Jackson, Chicago: Registration ICOVA

Grandparents Day 2016: September 11

Do Something Grand on Grandparents Day.
Grandparents Day 2016 is Sunday, Sept. 11. Get ideas at [Generations United](#).

Illinois Education Research Council: September 29-30

Illinois Education Research Council: Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium, Bloomington

Veterans Service Day: November 11

Serving those Who Served: [Veterans Service Day](#) is a day of service created to thank service men and women, our veterans, and their families.